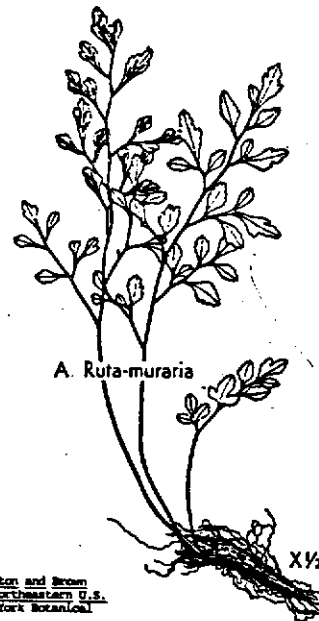


MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

WALL-RUE SPLEENWORT (Asplenium ruta-muraria L.)

DESCRIPTION

Wall-Rue Spleenwort is a small (fronds 1 - 7 in, 4 -17 cm) delicate evergreen fern that grows in clusters or tufts. The small fan-shaped leaflets are slightly leathery, bluish or olive-green and are borne on somewhat rigid stalks. The leaflets are toothed or have indented edges. The fruiting sori occur in short oblong clusters on the underside of the leaflets along the veins from June through September. The plant often has many dead stalks attached to the roots. In times of drought the plant dries up, appearing dead, but revives quickly with rain.

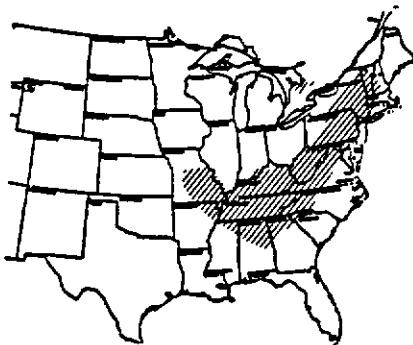


Classon, H.A. The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern U.S. and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, 1952.

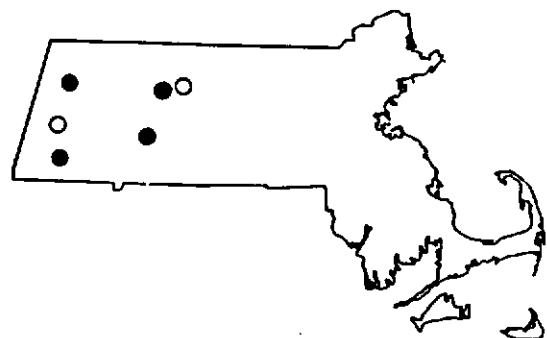
SIMILAR SPECIES

Mountain Spleenwort (Asplenium montanum) superficially resembles Wall-Rue Spleenwort but its leaflets are not fan-shaped nor as delicately cut. Young Fragile Fern (Cystopteris fragilis) is sometimes hard to distinguish from Wall-Rue Spleenwort but its leaves are much thinner textured (nearly translucent) and do not produce sori. Mature Fragile Fern is several times larger than Wall-Rue Spleenwort, its leaves sub-opposite with triangular leaflets.

(continued overleaf)



Distribution of Asplenium ruta-muraria



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Breeding Distribution in Massachusetts
by Town

(Asplenium ruta-muraria continued)

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Wall-Rue Spleenwort is found in shaded to open sites and is thought to prefer semi-shaded or open sites in cracks and fissures in dry ledges of dolomitic limestone and conglomerate. It occurs with Asplenium trichomanes, Cystopteris fragilis and Campanula rotundifolia.

RANGE

Wall-Rue Spleenwort is found from Vermont and southwestern Quebec south through the Appalachians to Alabama and westward to the Ozarks. North of the Ohio River Valley it occurs only as a disjunct in southwest Ontario and northwest Michigan.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Wall-Rue Spleenwort is considered "Threatened" in Massachusetts, and is rare throughout its range in New England. This species is currently (since 1978) found at 8 sites in 4 towns. It was formerly (before 1978) found in an additional 2 towns. This species is rare in the state due to the scarcity of appropriate habitat and overcollecting.